

Staff Wellness & Collective Care

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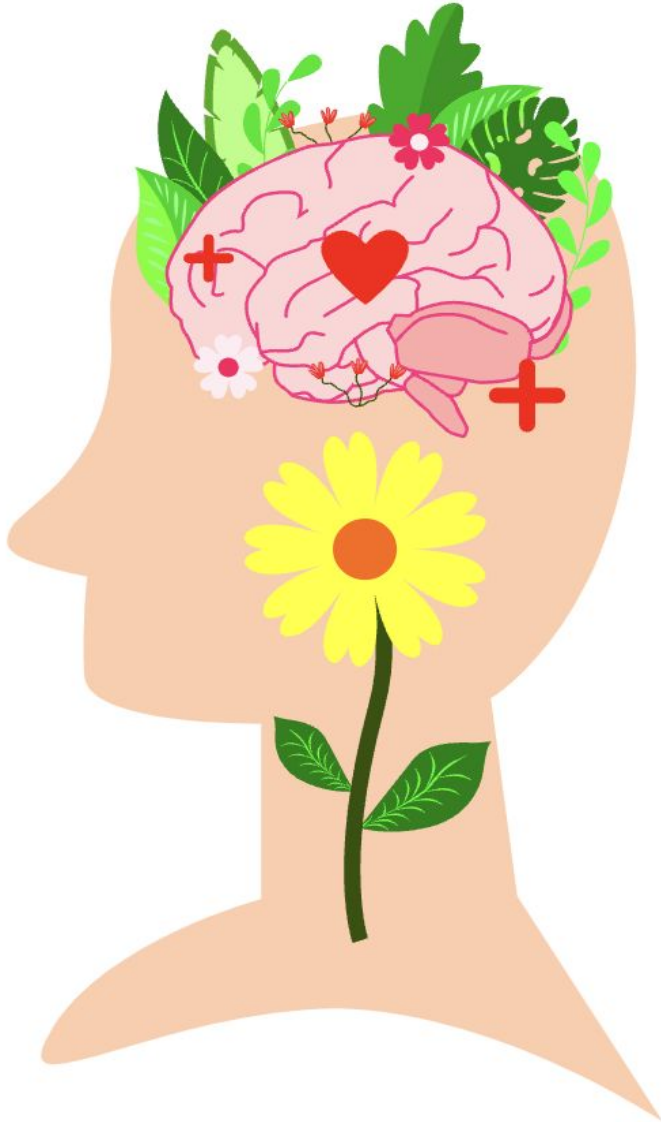
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Staff Wellness

*“There comes a point
where we need to stop
just pulling people out of
the river-
We need to go upstream
and find out why they’re
falling in.”*

-Desmond Tutu

Why is Staff Wellness Critical?



Teaching is one of the most stressful jobs in the country.

- 61% of teachers said their jobs were always or often stressful—more than double the rate of non-teaching working adults*
- 58% said they had poor mental health due to stress levels*

What factors made teaching so stressful **BEFORE** the pandemic?

Teacher Shortage - 2012

Number of Emergency Teaching Certificates Issued in Oklahoma in 2012

32

Teacher Shortage- 2022

Number of Emergency Teaching Certificates Issued in Oklahoma in 2022

2,969

Oklahoma Teacher Shortage- 2022

Oklahoma's Teacher Shortage

1,019

teaching vacancies

2,969

emergency teaching
certificates

67%

superintendents who believe teacher
hiring is more difficult than a year ago

Source: 2022 OSSBA Teacher Staffing Survey
and state Education Department reports



What Does this Mean for Schools?



When teachers leave-

- It's hard to find new candidates
- Finding certified/qualified candidates is even harder
- Stress on existing faculty & staff
- Wasted time & money

What happens when we cannot replace educators?

- Bigger class sizes
- Fewer class options for students
- More responsibilities for staff
- Understaffing- less supervision = less safety for kids/adults
- More discipline issues
- Reduced student outcomes

Trauma, Stress, Burnout, and Compassion Fatigue

“If you feel like you’re losing everything, remember that trees lose their leaves every year, and they stand tall and wait for better days to come.”

-Unknown

Trauma Defined



- Trauma is anything that overwhelms a person's **ability to cope**.
- Traumatic stress **can affect an individual's mental, physical, behavioral, emotional, and spiritual functioning**.
- The way trauma affects my brain, is different than how it affects your brain

Secondary Traumatic Stress

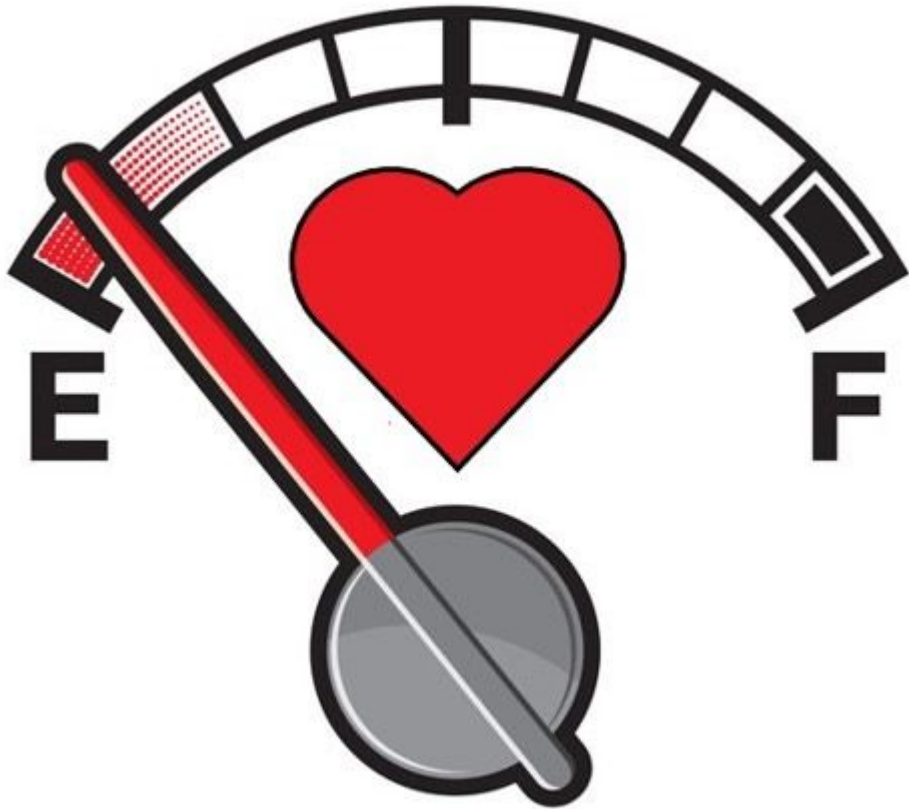
Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional distress that results when an individual hears about the traumatic experiences of another individual.

Distress may result from:

- Hearing someone's trauma stories.
- Seeing high levels of distress in the aftermath of a traumatic event.
- Retelling a student's story for reporting purposes.
- Seeing photos or images related to the trauma.
- Common in those who work in caretaking roles

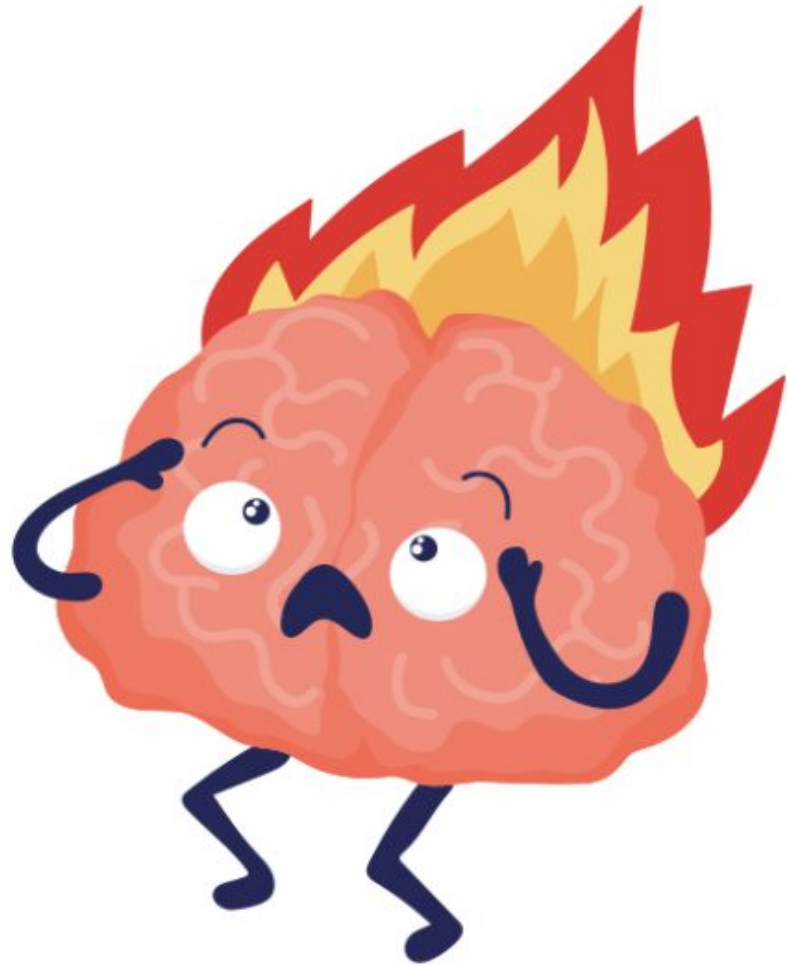


Compassion Fatigue



The emotional and physical burden created in caring for others. Can result from secondary/vicarious traumatic stress and is often results in the caregiver losing interest or having a reduced capacity of empathy for others.

What is Burnout?



An extreme form of **chronic stress** that can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion with behaviors that result in cynicism and detachment along with feelings of ineffectiveness.

Warning Signs of Professional Burnout

- Depersonalization
- Extended times of troubled concentration
- Negative attitude toward students and colleagues
- Intense trouble sleeping
- Loss of professional boundaries and ethics



In your experience, what factors lead to educator stress & burnout?



Common Factors of Educator Burnout

THE MODERN SCHOOLTEACHER



- Poor school funding
- Complications related to COVID-19
- Unattainable goals for standardized testing
- Classroom behavior issues
- Dealing with difficult parents
- Not enough planning time
- Feeling underappreciated
- Lack of autonomy
- Feelings of fear related to safety and security

Signs of Struggle

“Yesterday, I dared to struggle.

Today, I dare to win.”

-Bernadette Devlin

**Stress impacts
everyone
differently!**



COVID19

**WE ARE NOT ALL IN
THE SAME BOAT ...**

CallSarahFirst.com

We are NOT all in the same boat.

We are in the same storm.

Some have yachts, some have canoes, and some are drowning.

Just be kind and help wherever you can.

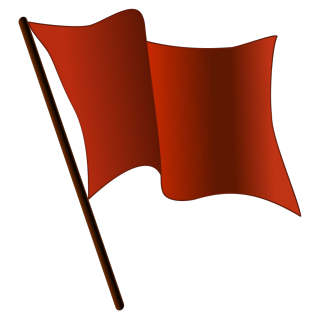
- Damian Barr

Common Signs of Teacher Burnout

- Feeling stressed or irritable all the time
- Feeling tired
- Having sleep issues (sleeping too much or having insomnia from worry)
- Feeling sad or overwhelmed when thinking about teaching (Sunday Scaries!)
- Not enjoying teaching
- Gaining or losing weight
- Unexplained hair loss



What red flags
indicate when
you are feeling
overwhelmed or
burned-out?



Self-Care

*“Happiness can be found,
even in the darkest of
times, if one only
remembers to turn on the
light.”*

-Albus Dumbledore

What are your favorite
self-care strategies?



What is Self Care?



Self-care means taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, you can be well, you can do your job, you can help and care for others, and you can do all the things you need to and want to accomplish in a day.

How to practice Self-Care

Physical

Social

Emotional

Psychological

Professional

Inexpensive

Easy to Implement

Effective for You

Sustainable

**Effective
Self-Care**

Prescriptive Self-Care

What recharges you?

What sparks joy?

How do you find rest?

**What is something you need- daily, weekly,
monthly?**

Myths about Self-Care

Self-care is not synonymous with self-indulgence or being selfish.

MYTHS ABOUT SELF-CARE

-  Self-care is an indulgence
-  Meaningful self-care includes making mindful changes in patterns of thoughts and behaviours that do not contribute to your wellbeing.
-  Self-care is selfish
-  When you make time for yourself and get sufficient rest & exercise, you feel more energetic and will be able to do more - for yourself as well as for those around you.
-  Self-care is a one-time experience
-  Looking after yourself is an ongoing practice in building resilience to face hardships and in preventing burnout.
-  Self-care is time consuming
-  Self-care does not require you to take out a huge chunk of time from your busy day.

- **Eat healthy**
- **Drink plenty of water**
- **Exercise**
- **Rest**
- **Stick to a routine**
- **Practice good hygiene**
- **Get outside**
- **Laugh**

Physical Self-Care

- **Stay connected to friends & family**
(If they bring you joy!)
- **Engage regularly in family rituals**
- **Perform random acts of kindness**
- **Reach out when needed**

Social Needs & Connections

- **Recognize and monitor signs and levels of stress**
- **Have quiet time by yourself**
- **Engage in enjoyable hobbies**
- **Limit screen time and media exposure**
- **Set small, realistic goals**

Emotional

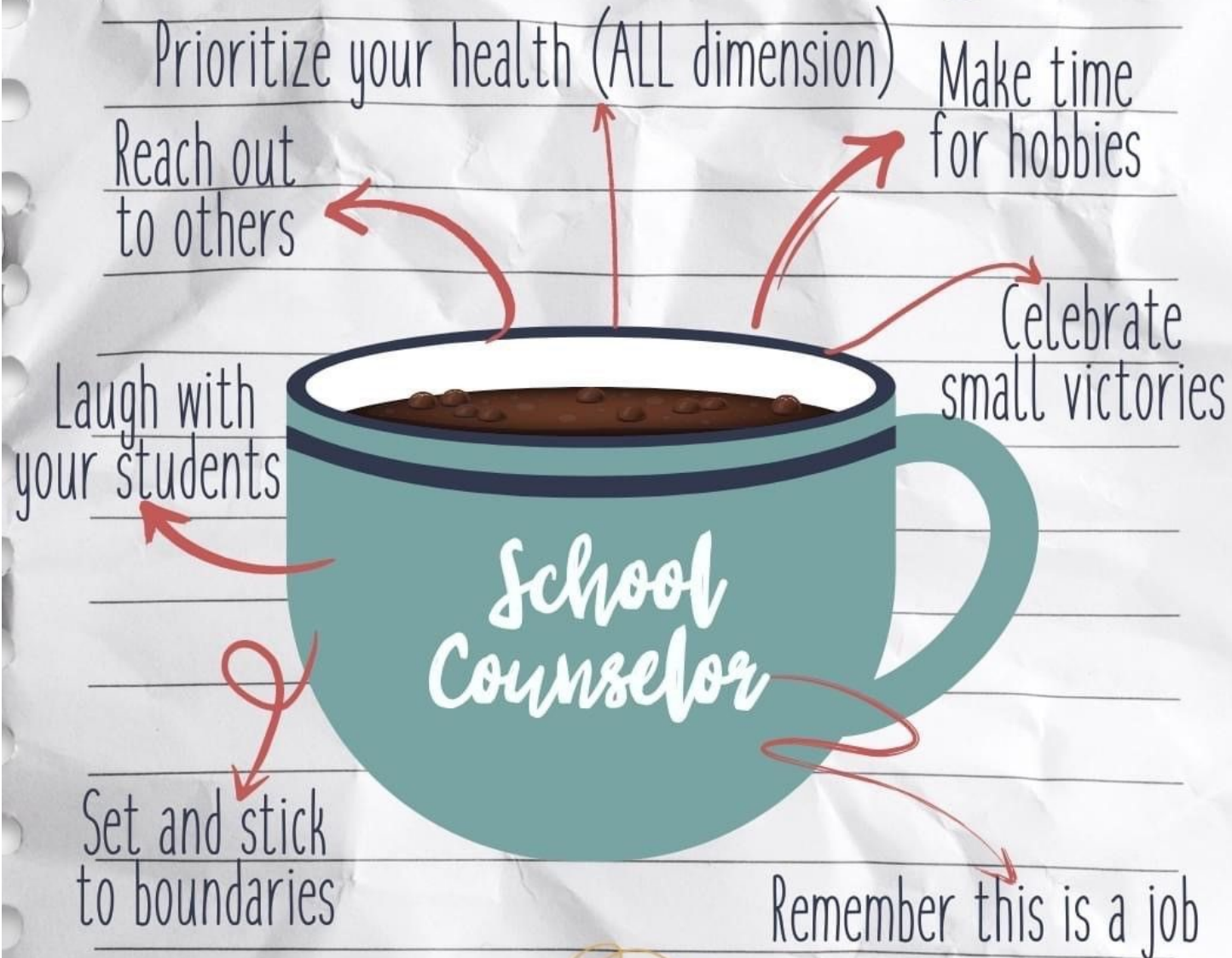
- Turn off phone/email during non working hours
- Celebrate successes
- Ask for help when needed
- Maintain a neat workspace
- Avoid professional toxicity
- Find your “people”
- Set priorities
- Don't be afraid to say no

Professional & Work-Based

Three things I can
do to practice
self-care...



Keep Your Counselor Mug Full



Hard Boundaries



Set boundaries early on - and hold them!
You can't be on-the-clock at all times!
Hard boundaries are **non-negotiable**

Soft Boundaries

Soft boundaries are more flexible and may change based on people, circumstances, and time

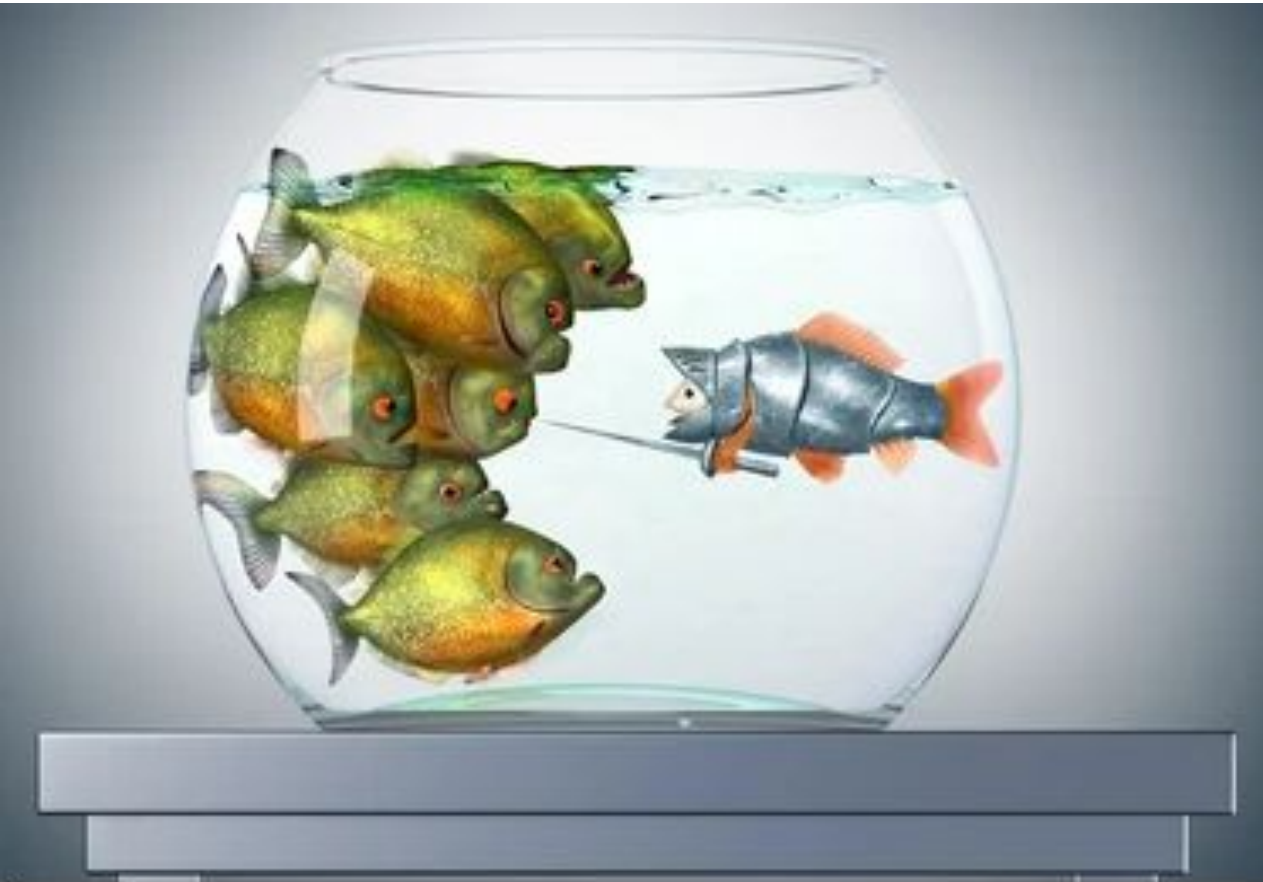


What are your
hard boundaries?

What are your
soft boundaries?



Pick Your Battles



Every “battle” consumes
time and **energy**-
How important is it?
What is the cost?
Will it make a positive
long-term impact?



The Great Lunchable Debate

Know who Supports You

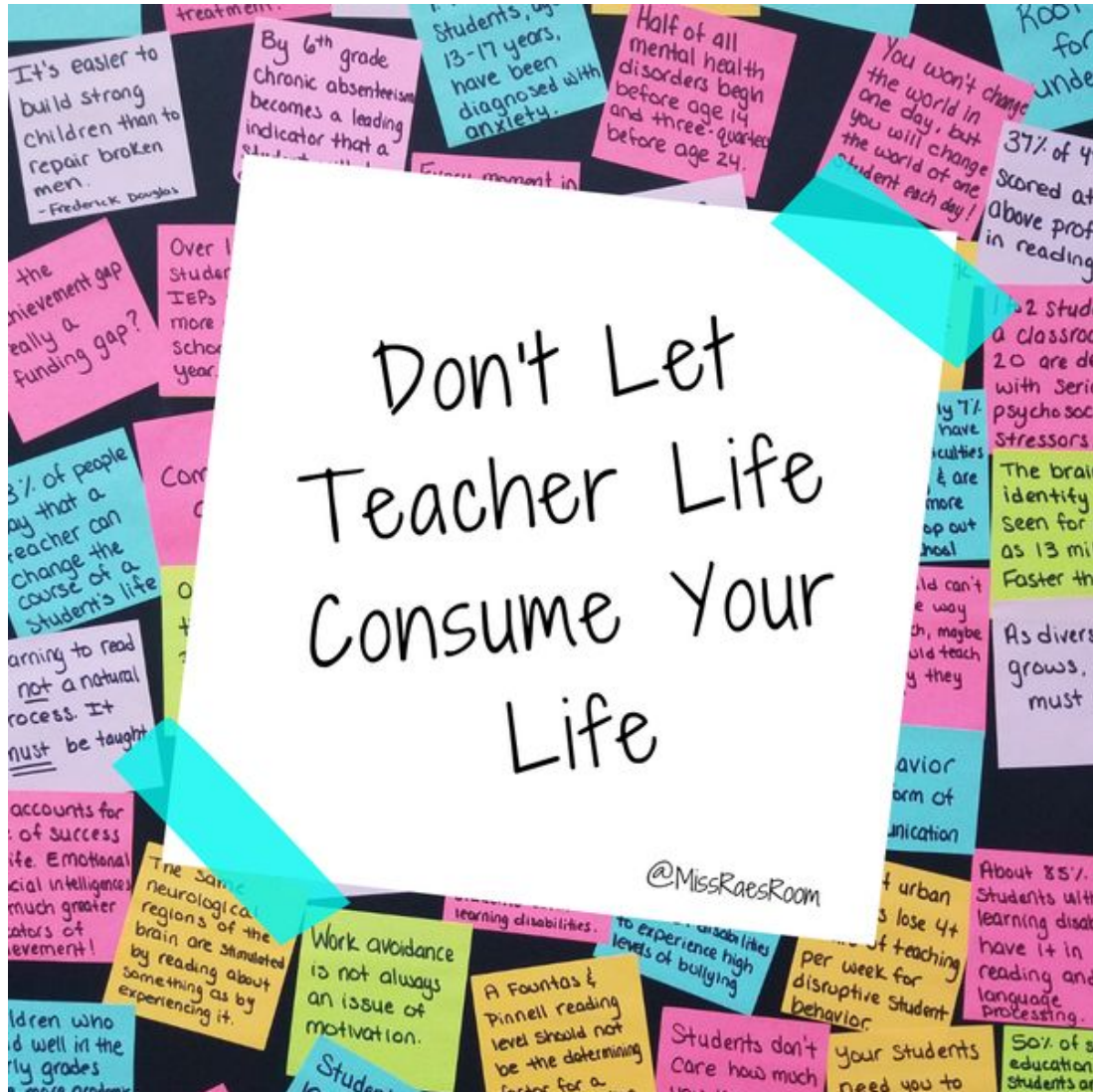
Who can you go to
when you're struggling?

At work?
At home?

Spend time with those
people!



Ask for Professional Help



Reach out for professional help, when needed

Be honest with yourself and others regarding your struggles & needs

Collective Care

“Everyone enjoys being honored and appreciated. Sometimes even the simplest act of gratitude can change someone’s entire day.”

-Roy T. Bennett

Self-Care is Not Enough

“When I first heard the term ‘collective care’ it made so much sense. More and more, I have felt that ‘self care’ is a term that has a whiff of blame, an inference that it is our fault if we are struggling.”

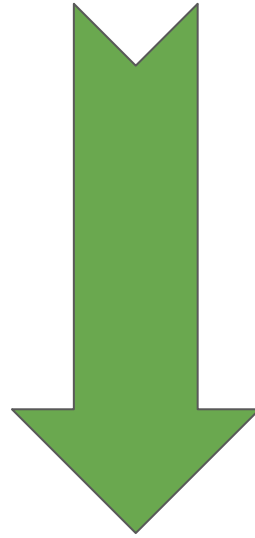
“Of course we need to look after ourselves. But perhaps more importantly, we need to look after each other.”

What is Collective Care?

Collective care refers to seeing members' well-being – particularly their emotional health – as a **shared responsibility** of the group rather than the lone task of an individual.

Collective Care Plan

Traditional care plans focus on **student** progress, success, and well-being



Collective care plans focus on the progress, success, and well-being of **students AND employees.**

NOT either/or
It is BOTH/AND

Five ~~Love~~ Languages of the Workplace

Appreciation

It might sound strange to suggest using love/appreciation languages to improve your professional relationships, but if you want to discover new ways to communicate appreciation and respect for your colleagues—the languages are the perfect starting point.

Your workplace relationships are comparable to a marriage. Just like marriages, business relationships need work to keep them alive and thriving!

Five “Appreciation” Languages of the Workplace



Not everyone expresses or experiences appreciation in the same way, and likewise, people are diverse in the ways they prefer to receive gratitude. These languages are distinct ways to communicate and receive appreciation.

The idea is that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to expressing care and compassion to others. This approach is also useful as you work with students, communicate with parents, or create relationships with stakeholders and supporters.

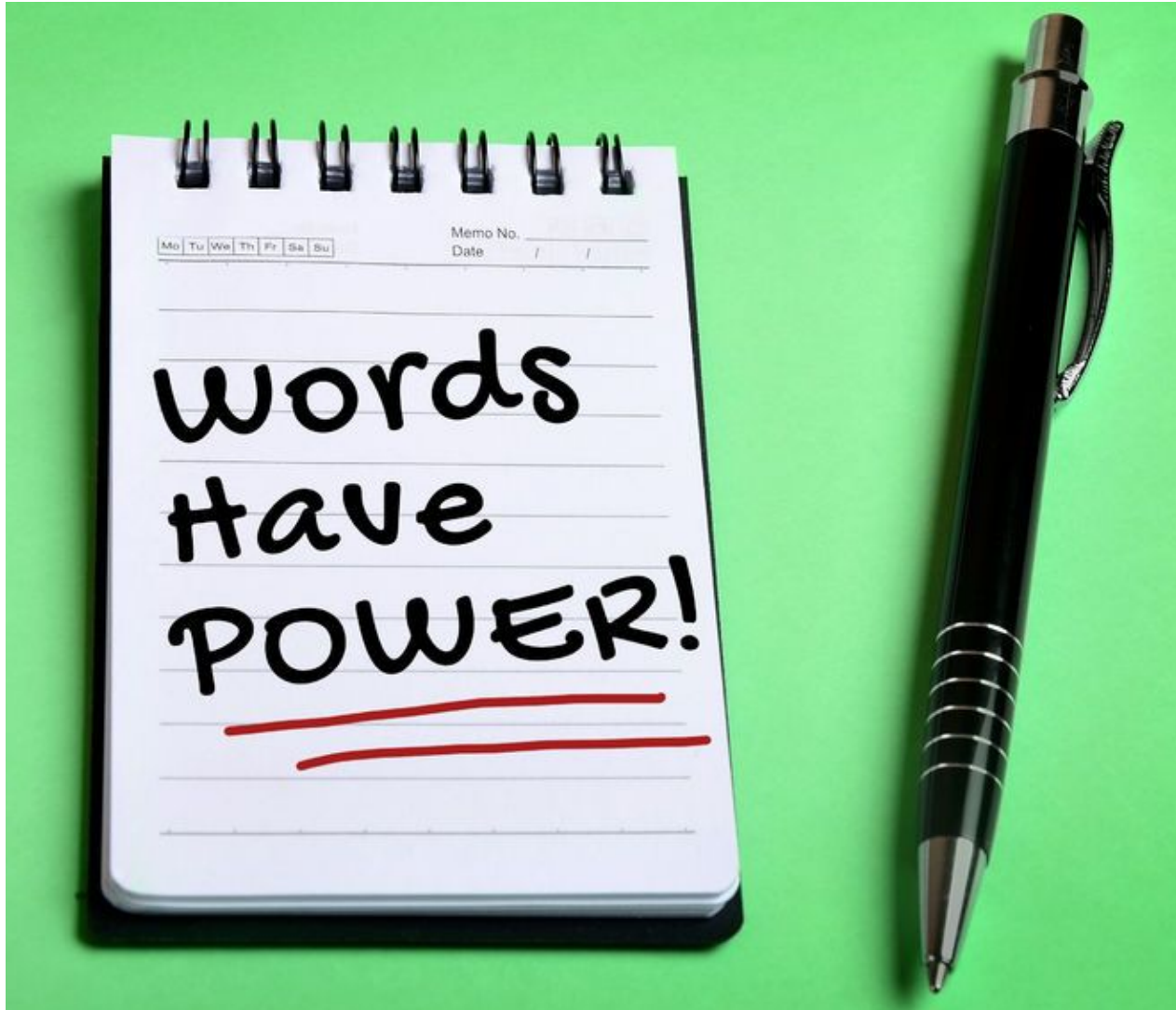
Five Appreciation Languages of the Workplace

Everyone's motivation is different and fueled by a unique set of beliefs and preferences. Whether it's a pat on the back, a cash reward for going above and beyond, or some one-on-one time with someone who recognizes your effort, we each have distinct feelings about what makes us feel most valued.

When we give and receive the right kind of praise and encouragement, stronger connections between colleagues are built, fortifying an organization's overall strength.



Words of Affirmation



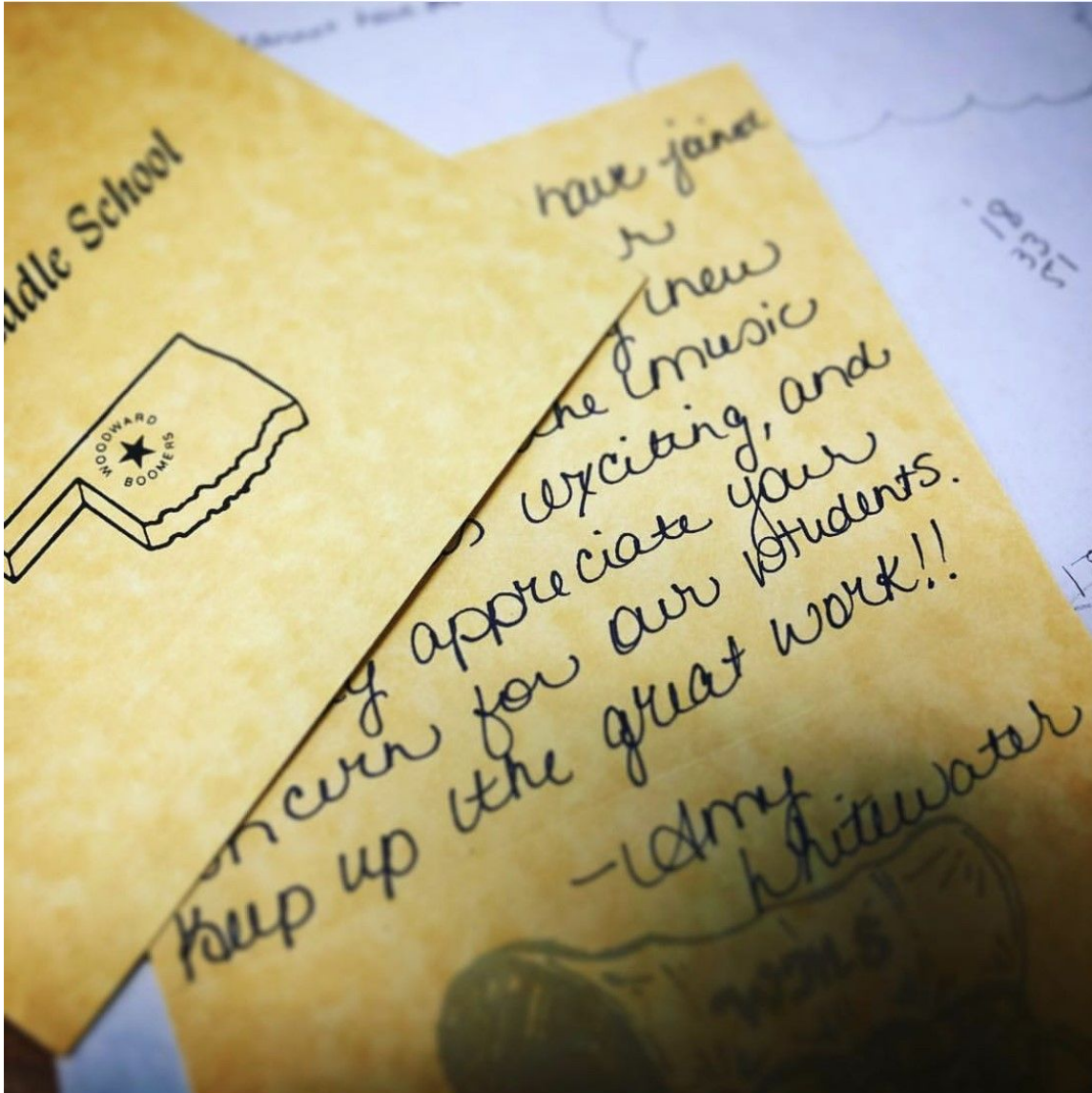
Words of affirmation are words that communicate your respect, appreciation, and admiration for another person. They're positive words and phrases used to uplift someone. These compliments and words of encouragement don't have to be said directly to the person. A simple hand-written note is appreciated just as much as a personal phone call.

Words of Affirmation

I appreciate that you are always outside your door to greet students in the morning. I see you giving them high-fives, and I know it helps them start the day on the right foot!

What a wonderful Christmas program! I know you put a lot of time and effort into planning it. The parents loved it, and the kids had a great time. Well done!

Words of Affirmation



"I'm super impressed with your leadership this week. You've done a fantastic job, and I couldn't be prouder! Keep up the awesome work!" -Mrs. W

- Emails
- Spoken words
- Hand-written notes
- Cards
- Texts
- Memes

Group Activity

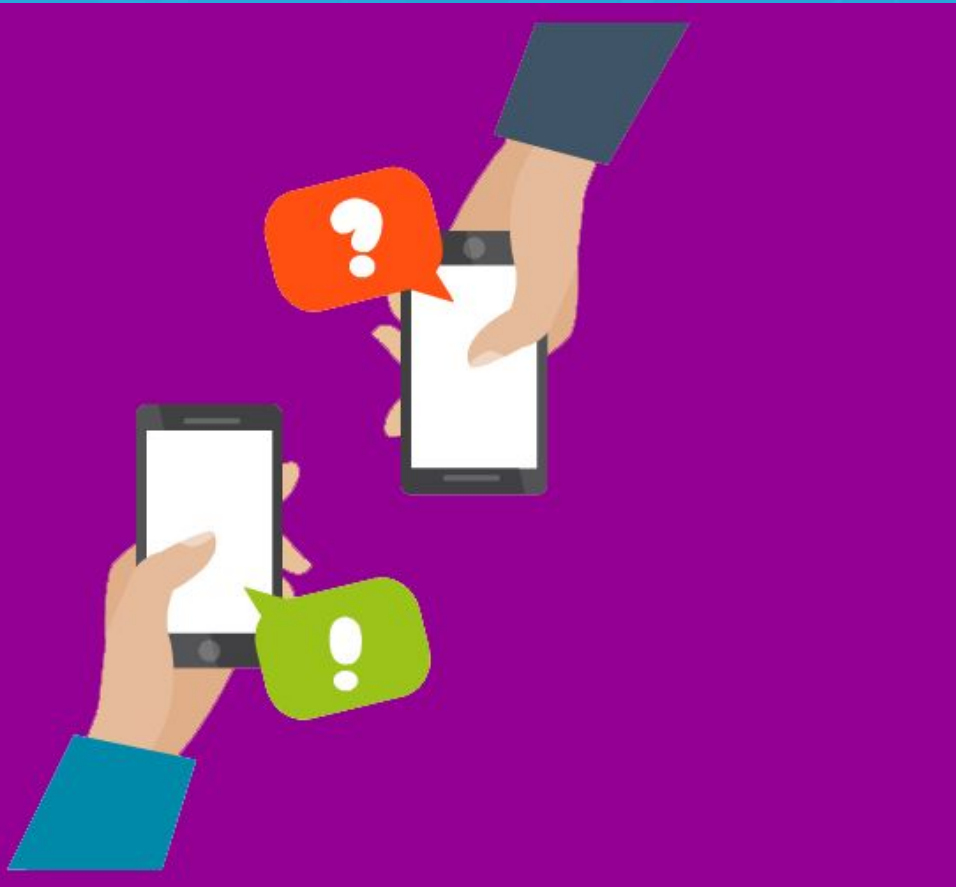
**Who do you admire?
Who has done a good job?
Who needs support?
Who do you appreciate?
Who has tried something new?
Who shares your sense of humor?**

Send a text, email, or meme to let them know that you SEE them!

Take one minute to do it!



Discuss with an Elbow Partner



How did it make you feel to send the message?

How do you think the recipient felt?

Did you get a response?

Acts of Service

Many people feel appreciated and acknowledged if another person volunteers to help them or offers to "lend a hand."

For some, there's nothing better than when a partner goes out of their way to help around the house. Similarly, small gestures show your colleagues whose primary language are acts of service they are valued.



Sample Acts of Service



- Covering lunch/breakfast/afternoon duty
- Running off copies
- Picking up supplies
- Watching a colleague's class while he/she goes to the restroom
- Cooking or baking for others
- Co-teaching
- Helping someone with technology
- Sharing lesson plans
- Making sure dietary needs are met during potlucks or other food-based get togethers

Gifts



A gift is like a suitor sending an unexpected bouquet to someone he/she wants to impress. There are times when you can show appreciation to your coworkers with a simple gift.

Gifts in the workplace can also be a form of information, such as providing your manager or coworker with a relevant article, promotional items, or a personalized present on their birthday.

*Don't break the bank!

Sample Gifts

- Teaching supplies- markers, colored chalk, sticky notes, etc.
- Books
- Items or information related to hobbies or interests
- Coffee or favorite drink
- Baked goods or lunch
- Fun comics or memes
- Tickets to a local event

"I saw this, and I thought of you!"

*Keep it **simple** and **inexpensive**. It's ok to regift or recycle!



Quality Time



The best way to show you are a team player is to show up!

If you want to show your colleagues that you appreciate them and the work they do, it never hurts to think of creative approaches to or spend time with them at work or outside of work.

Time is valuable!

Quality Time Examples

- Collaborate on a project or event
- Attend an event (band program, ball game, art show, etc.)
- Have lunch together in your classroom or office
- Drop by the classroom/office to say hello and do a check-in
- Go to after-work activities together (yoga, coffee-run, book club, golf, etc.)
- Meet for lunch or dinner



Physical Touch

Hug



Wave



Handshake



High Five



Fist Bump



Physical touch is **NOT** for everyone!

Some people respond favorably to physical affirmations such as high-fives, handshakes, fist bumps, and pats on the back. You may also offer a quick hug (particularly in emotional situations), but **always** ensure that it's okay with the other person—personal boundaries, people!

Use with eye contact and the person's name for extra emphasis!

Combining the Languages

Sometimes the languages **overlap**, creating more impact!

- Get-together with a friend to bake treats for your colleagues
- Go to lunch together and pick up the bill
- Tell someone what a great job they're doing and give them a high-five
- Help a colleague plan an event and participate
- Attend a colleague's event and send a positive response



Nurturing a Supportive Climate

“I have learned that people will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them FEEL.”

-Maya Angelou

Collective Care & Climate

TRUST EXISTS WHEN ...

Adapted from Insights by Matt Whiat



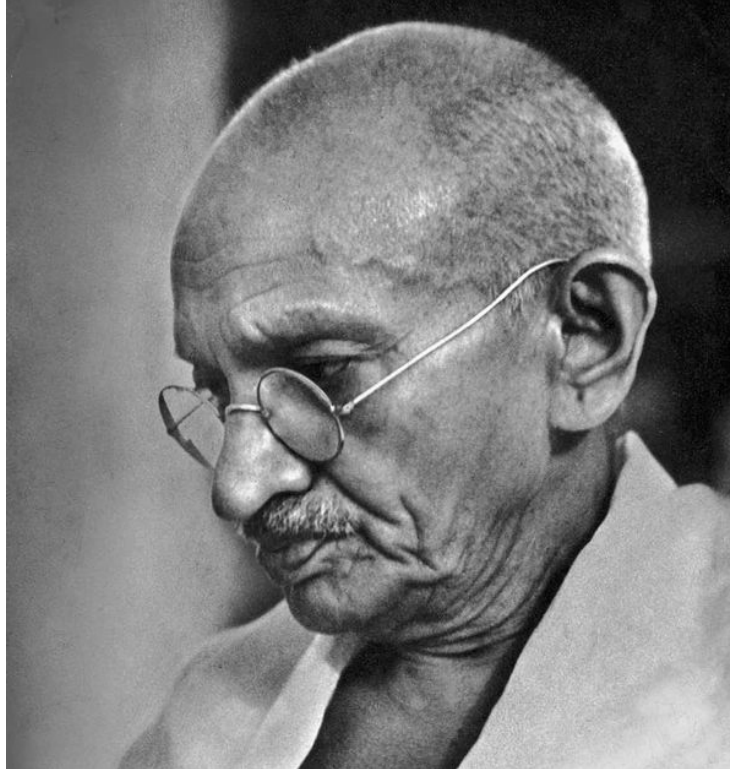
Employees need permission to take care of themselves.

- Trust that there will not be judgement associated with asking for help.
- Leaders can help staff by prioritizing their responsibilities and communicating boundaries to parents on behalf of staff.

Ex: Communicate to parents that staff will only respond to emails sent before 4:00 PM; if an email is sent after 4:00, parents should expect a response the following day.

Reduce Toxic Negativity

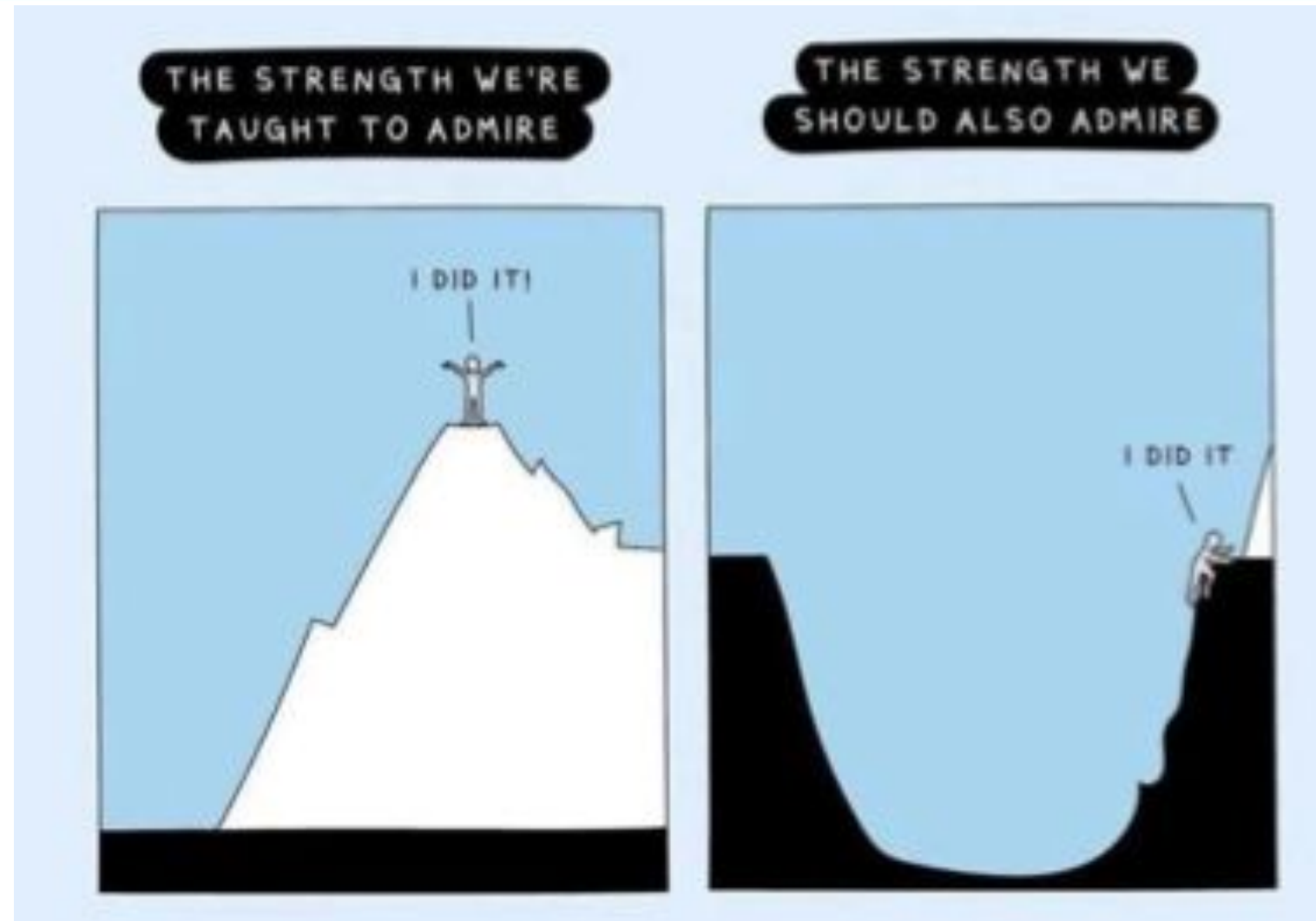
- Redirect negativity
- Share positive outcomes & successes
- Don't get drawn-in
- Remember: Behavior is communication!
- Understand the difference between **venting** and **toxicity**



“I will not allow anyone to walk in my mind with dirty feet” – Gandhi

Collective Care & Climate

Administration models self-care and vulnerability.



Collective Care & Climate

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

How are you feeling about the week ahead?
Comment an emoji below!



HAPPY



READY TO
CRUSH IT



A LITTLE
NERVOUS



STRUGGLING
WITH IT



PRETTY
GOOD



VERY
EXCITED

See that your voice matters.

- Building leaders can send a short 3-4 question check-in survey to see how everyone is doing and what support they might need.
- This supports staff and reassures them that someone is looking out for them and caring about their well-being.

Collective Care & Climate

Focus on core priorities - not the next new thing.

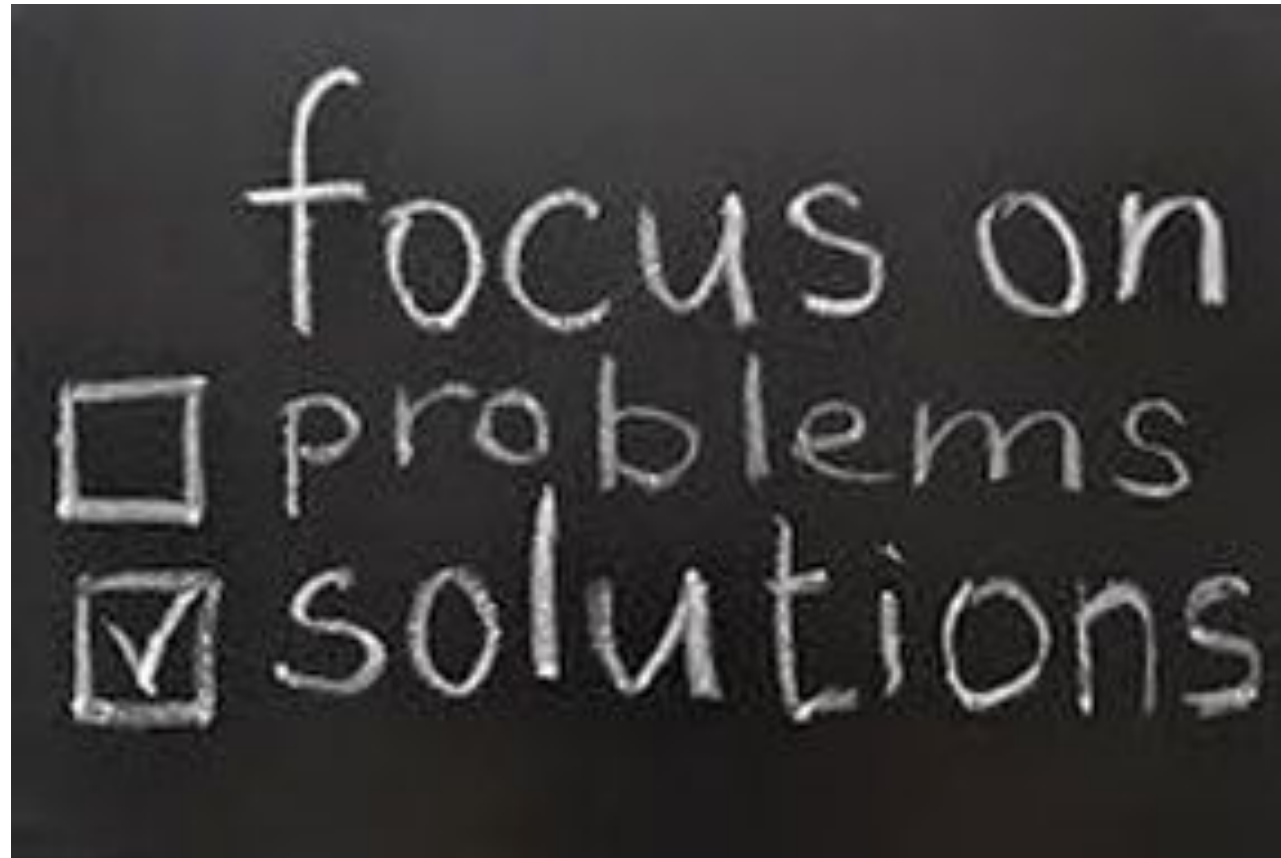
- What is your school's vision? Mission?
- How does it align with caring for your staff?

Initiative fatigue is REAL



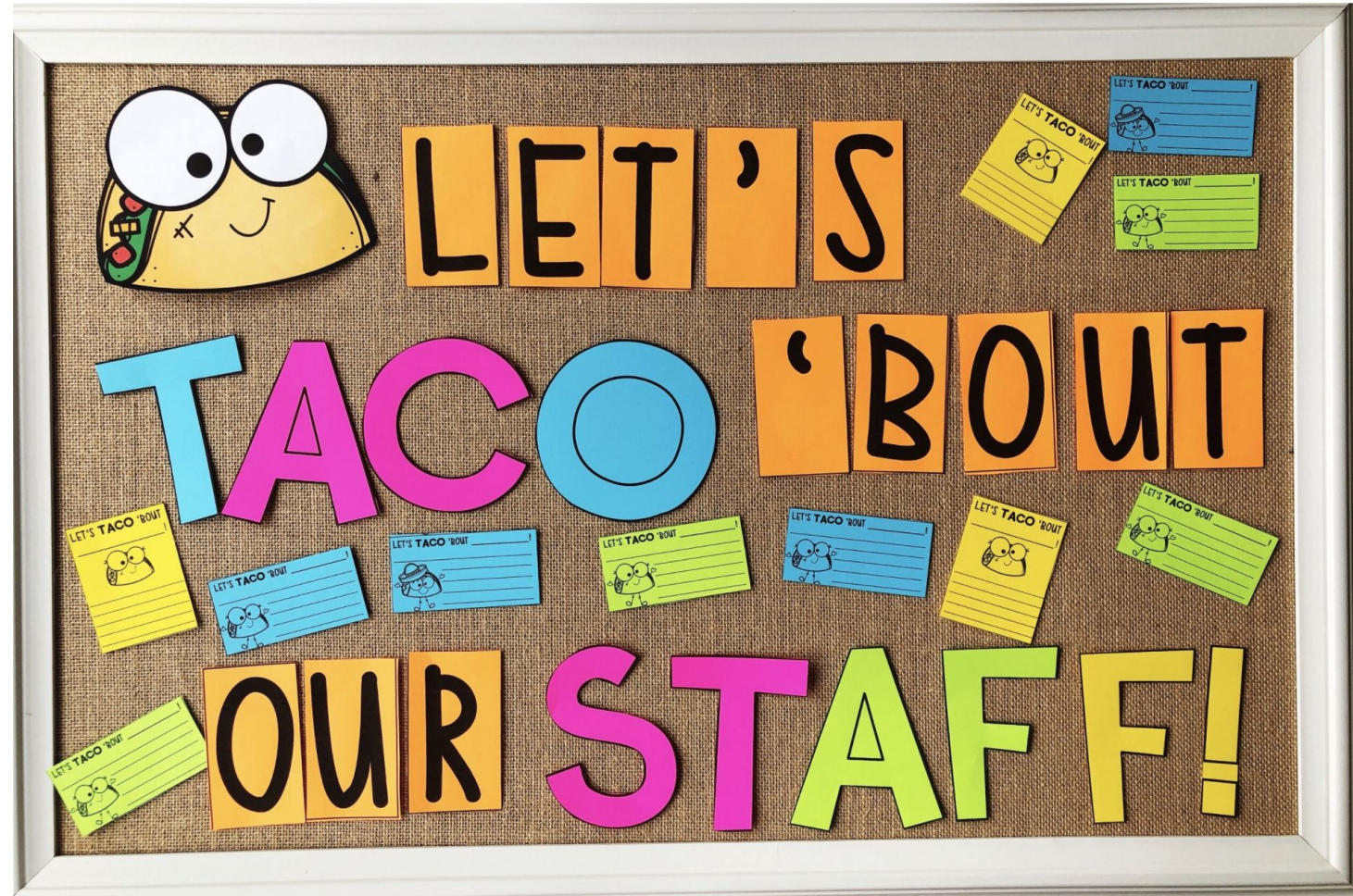
Collective Care & Climate

Refrain from problem admiration and stay focused on solutions.



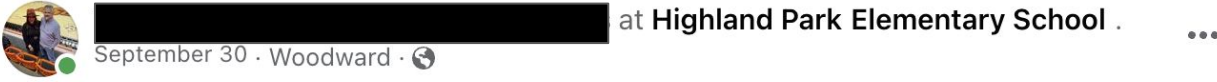
Staff Shout-Out Board

- Highlight work well-done
- Spotlight new ideas or creativity
- Thank someone for helping
- Include EVERYONE
- Also works in the classroom!
- Love Language = Words of affirmation



(Any excuse to eat tacos!)

Woot-Woot Wagon/Coffee Cart



WOOT! WOOT! It's friday and end of the month at Highland Park! Which means Woot Woot Wagon for our AMAZING staff!!! ❤️🍎❤️



- Fill the cart with snacks, coffee, candy, personal care items, homemade treats, notes, etc.
- Deliver to teachers
- Encourage students to participate
- Celebrate the **people** and the good **work** they do!
- PTO, student council, NHS, community stakeholders can help
- Love Language = Act of service!



Recognition of All-Stars

- Select a trait, action, or quality that you want to encourage
- Identify those who demonstrate the trait, action, or quality
- Provide a simple award or token of appreciation
- Share for others to see



“Chelsea keeps a positive environment in her classroom and inspires her students to achieve more. Mrs. Cruse is passionate and caring. She always accepts everyone, regularly checks on her students, and listens intently to her students' needs. She always greets her students with genuine enthusiasm and asks about their days and how they are feeling.”

Recognition of All-Stars



Woodward Public Schools

April 28, 2021 · 🌐

Alex is a vital member of the Horace Mann AWARE Mental Health team. She works diligently to support teachers in implementing any new processes to help students! Alex has implemented virtual morning announcements in which she teaches new words of the month (Character traits) to our students.

👍❤️ 35

3 comments 2 shares



Like



Comment



Share



Oldest ▼



[Redacted]

Congratulations Alex Nelson!!! You are the best!!!

Like Reply 1y



[Redacted]

A [Redacted] is an ALL STAR!

Like Reply 1y



[Redacted]

That is awesome, congratulations

Appreciation Events

- Can be simple
- Focus on FUN and appreciation!
- Call-in your army of supporters
- Do it during WORK time if possible
- Themes, food, games, music, door prizes
- Do your best to take the work **OFF** the faculty/staff



Appreciation Events





Connie [redacted]

Thank you for a very enjoyable event!

Like Reply 1y



Dawn [redacted]

It was a great day with terrific food

Like Reply 1y



Stephanie [redacted]

Thank you for a great afternoon! Wonderful lunch too!!

Like Reply 1y



Myca [redacted]

Oh how fun!!

Like Reply 1y

Appreciation Events- Reactions



Debbie [redacted]
Fun day! Thanks! ...

Like Reply 1y



Shirley [redacted]
Thank you for the Wonderful Lunch and the Gift Cards! We really do appreciate your thoughtfulness!

Like Reply 1y



Susan [redacted]
We have some awesome men and women in this town! It takes a very special person to be a teacher!! Congratulations for making it through a crazy year 🥰

Like Reply 1y



💎 Top fan
Tammy [redacted]
Relaxing and fun! THANK YOU!

Like Reply 1y

Appreciation Events- Reactions

Community Coloring Wall



Coloring relaxes the fear center of your brain

- Requires focus, opens up frontal lobe for organizing and problem solving

Generates mindfulness & quietness

Builds school-wide collaboration

Uses both sides of your brain

- Logic tells you to stay in the lines
- Color use enlightens your creative side

It's FUN and it visually interesting!

Staff Gratitude Notebook

- Write a note to a colleague expressing your respect, gratitude, admiration, or thanks
- Pass it along-weekly/monthly
- Use more than one!



Find a Marigold - Be a Marigold

- Vegetables & flowers **thrive** when they are planted next to '**companion plants**'.
- These plants offer **support** and **protection** from toxins, pests, and weeds.
- Marigold flowers have an amazing ability to ward off vegetable eating pests and harmful weeds that otherwise steal nutrients from the soil and suffocate other plants.
- **Plants that grow around marigolds tend to thrive.**



Water the Marigolds!



If we extrapolate this analogy into our human sphere, we can see **marigolds exist in our communities.**

They are the ones that **foster growth, encouragement and offer support to others** who want to change and grow.

They are the people who are cheerleaders, who **bolster** others when times are tough, and who offer their expertise to help people understand something new.

Final Thoughts

Self-care practices are best practices for **EVERYONE.**

Becoming comfortable with these practices is a **process.** It does not happen overnight.

Small changes make big differences.

Schoolwide support is **key.**

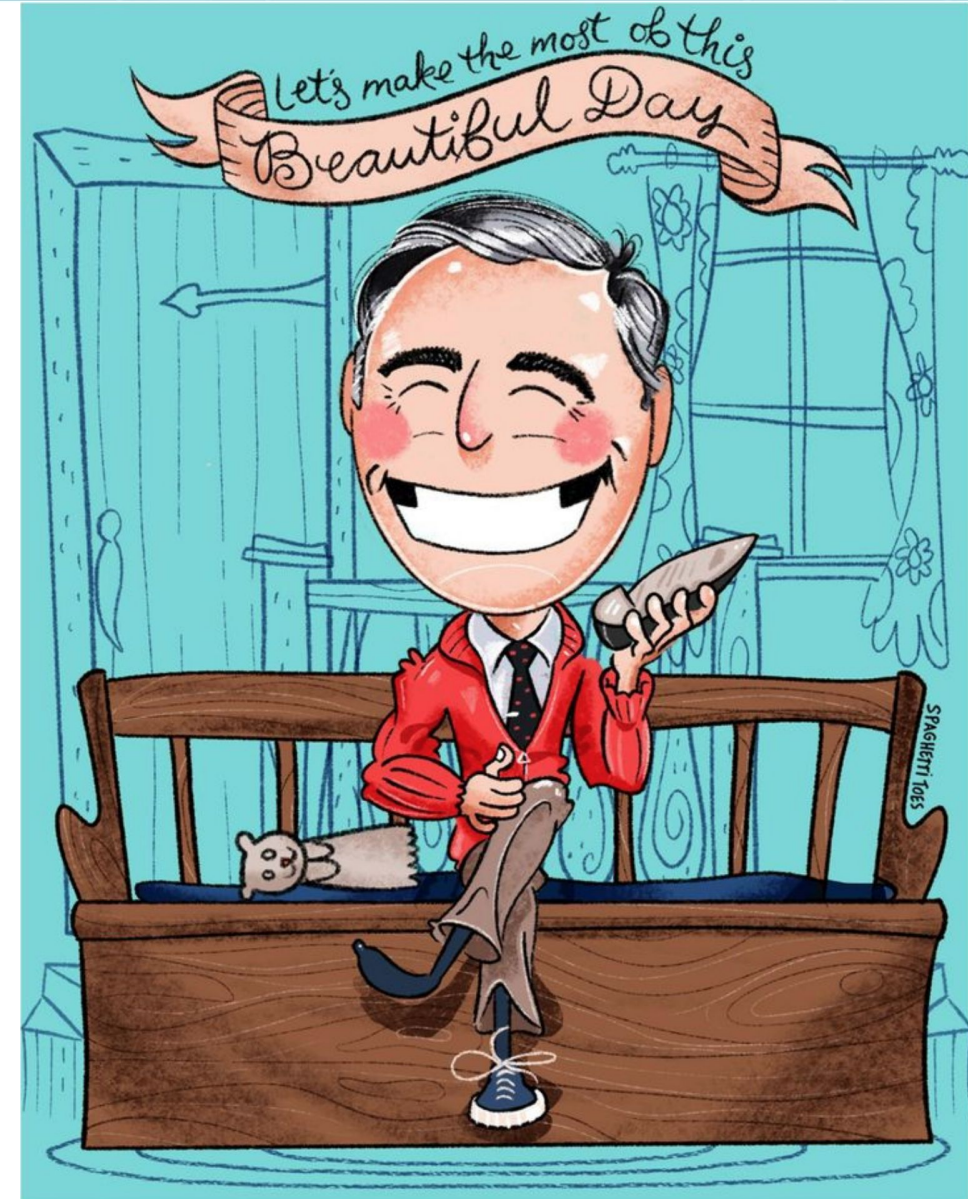
Positive change is lead and championed by school administrators, but **everyone has a role to play.**

More professional development, training, and coaching is available

Reflection Time!



- Turn to a neighbor
- Discuss something that you learned today.
- What strategies, techniques, or suggestions can you use to support yourself?
- What can you do to support others?



Presentation Evaluation

- Your feedback is important!
- Please take a moment to complete this survey to let us know how we can improve and enhance our trainings in the future.

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Click here: [Evaluation Form](#)



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